CSE190c Pre-Production for Animated Films November 26, 2008

Plans and Feedback from Production Review

**Plans for the rest of the Quarter**

We have four iterations of your preproduction left – today, December 1rst, December 3rd and December 10th

We plan to iterate the production work for Stitches for each of these sessions.

**Today** we will split into 2 groups and work on revisions. See below for details.

**Monday** we will review a revised story reel including some faux animation, review the start of a story bible that contains a 50 step (or fewer) beat sheet, a full elements list, character descriptions for each character, layout for sets, revised concept art for both real and cloth worlds with stills and animation reference for both, character design sheets, and written goals for the reference reels.

Wednesday December 3rd, we will iterate everything from December 1rst and do final review for all pre-production. We will also review initial concept art for the signature shots for Winter Quarter.

The signature shots will be the last two shots of the film. They will be the look and feel for the magical memory shot that includes the animation on the yurt with inspiration from the quilt sequences and the last shot of Mei in the RW yurt continuing the sewing tradition.

Please note:

Quilt World will become **Cloth World** in order to avoid confusion.

**Real World** is only real because it is not in the cloth world.

We want the whole team to make a concerted effort to research and reinforce efforts to include **Mongolian implements/ ritual and style/design** in the last few revisions of the production in order to make it feel more immersive and authentic. We’ve assigned specific duties to individuals and small groups to more easily distribute the workload and hopefully meet our production schedule deadlines. We want to encourage anyone who wants to help with tasks assigned to others to do so.

**Group 1**

**Anton and Gary** will be working with this group so that you can reach your deadlines and goals.

Concept Art/Character Design/Storyboards

**Marianne, Happy, Alec, Brian, Happy, Patrick, Nick, Tracey**

What we’d like you to work on:

We’d like to see one version of the preproduction work today. We’d like to see a revised version for Monday.

The last version of your work for us to provide feedback will be Wednesday December 3rd so plan to iterate between now and then.

Individual and Small Group work:

**Brian B**: We want you to design and research the look of the quilt world as compared/contrasted to the real world (use the notes we left you on the printouts you gave us). We’d like you to create two examples of each including some animated ideas. You can use clear reference for this or create some artwork or both. The idea is for you to get us to immerse ourselves in these two worlds, visually. Also, please create concept art that the story boarders can use for initial reference on the design of the magical memory combination of the cloth and real world at the end of the film. Try a few ideas and show us what you think might support the story when merging the cloth and real worlds visually. Focus on the look for **the transition section**s of the story.

**Tracey, Happy and Marianne** – We’d like you to work together on the design of the Characters. We’ll need several ideas for the design for 6 yr old Mei, 18 year old Mei and 35, 40 and 52 yr old Onyo. We’d like to review a few more options using the notes we’ll provide to you today and for you to create initial Character Sheets and a Family Tree for Monday.

See feedback we have for you on the current character designs that were submitted. Focus on creating distinctive Mongolian style and consistent design shifts from one age to the next so that it’s clear it’s the same character. Also try to design characters that fit their age.

**Happy** Draw and color boards for each review so that we can iterate look and feel. Color and make visually consistent all of the final boards for extra credit for review on the 10th. Get boards to Andy for his final reel edit.

**Happy, Patrick, Nick, Marianne** – With Gary and Anton’s help, design and draw a set of boards for Monday that follows and supports the new story sheet. Work with Gary and Anton to try both ideas for the omen options. We will again have more than one option for Andy to edit. Use Andy’s suggestions for shot layout if needed.

**Marianne, Patrick and Nick**: Provide faux animation for the storyreel as directed by Gary and Anton.

**Alec Nick and Brian** – Please design the layout for inside of Yurt and also give your prop and character list to the story group so that they can include everything needed in the elements list. Also, please research and create another layout for the campfire set for Mei while she is on her way to get medicine for her mother. Please focus on researching what might be authentic to the Mongolian culture and then be clear why you are adding those props to the design/layout in order to support the story.

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**Group 2**

Work with **Brian, Erik and JP**

**Story/Editing/Story Bible/Elements List/Updated Reference Reels**

**Jimmy, Daren, Jesse, Daniel, Andy**

Today: Your group will work with **Brian and Erik and JP** to transfer the new story sheet into a functional beat sheet. Your beat sheet will be 50 beats or less and contain new shot goals when needed attached to each step. The beat sheet will have sequence and shot names and indicators of whether we see the beat in the “Real World” or the “Cloth World.” You will need to have beat numbers and shot names that are based on developing a **production convention**. Work with **JP and Erik** on this. When completed, let me review it and send a copy to everyone in the class. You will also be creating an elements list for use both in pre-production and production planning and a Family Tree. **JP will help you with the Elements list and Family Tree.** Work **with Brian and Erik on shot layout and descriptions** and send me a first pass today.

**As a group**: For your story, estimate what time period your story takes place – in the cloth world, in the real world and in our edited version of the storyreel. Add these details, as a first pass, and as best you can, to the story you receive today.

**Jimmy**, as part of your extra credit, you will be starting to design the story bible and plan to present a first iteration of the story bible containing whatever is ready from the pre production groups for Monday December 1rst.

**Andy**, you will be working with **Erik** to translate the beat sheet shot descriptions to boards and consider how the boards will be edited with pacing in the reel for Monday. You will also work with **Erik and the story boarders** on ideas for the use of faux animation for the Monday iteration of the story reel. You will be editing two versions of the reel for Monday based on the two ideas we have for the Omen in the story. Please continue communicate with **Happy** to set realistic deadlines with Happy for the deadlines of the boards and leave enough time to get your work to us before class on Monday.

**Monday December 1rst**:

**Andy** will review his reels with **Erik and Brian** for suggestions re. how to describe the shots in the beat sheet cinematically. **Andy** will work with the boarders to coordinate on the next iteration of the boards with the emphasis on only the changes that need to be made and include changes or additions for the **faux animation**.

**Wednesday December 3rd:**

**Jimmy**: 2nd review of the **Story Bible** (your xtra credit work) and **Mood Ree**l review. Work with storyboard group when iterating the Beatsheet and Story Bible**. Erik and JP** will provide guidance and feedback on the Story Bible and Mood Reel.

**Daniel and Daren**: Iterate the **Story Story Reel** based on most current story beat sheet and storyreel**. Brian and Erik and JP** will provide support for this.

**Daren**: Investigate options for **audio for the final Stitches storyreel**. Provide audio for Andy’s final version of the storyreel.

**Jesse:** Present completed **Elements** list and pull together a single view of the **Family Tree** based on the character and prop design. Work with **JP** on this. Work on one of the reference reels TBA.

**Andy:**  Provide two edited **Storyreels** based on the work done with the storyboarders. Justify the merits of both. Complete one final reel for the deadline on the10th that represents the best storytelling skills possible. Work closely with Happy and the other boarders on the inclusion of the faux animation.

**For the December 10th  deadline:**

**You will receive a checklist of everything expected of you by Wednesday December 3rd. Iterate everything according to the feedback you receive from us in class on Wednesday and complete all of the tasks assigned in your group and to you individually.**

**Complete an individual and group critique and send it to me, Erik and JP by your December 10th deadline.**

**All work will be due to us for final review by December 10th at 3 pm. Make sure that we can find all of your work to review. It is your responsibility to make sure that it is where it is supposed to be on the server and that it is appropriately labeled, rendered properly, and up to date so that we can find it and review it.**

**CSE 190c Preproduction for Animated Film**

**Feedback from Production Review November 25, 2008**

**Storyboard Artists**

From now on, please devise on a system to allow you to label each one of your boards using the naming convention that the story group provides you and develop a fool proof system for getting the boards to Happy on time. Happy, please work with the group to make sure that you get all boards labeled and easy to organize and then send them off to Andy for his use. **Gary and Anton** will review the specifics of your boards with you today. However, in general, the group was very happy with the quality of the boards so far. Color helps enrmousy. You’re biggest challenge is to revise what you have for the next iteration with ideas for faux animation and color/style in mind. You’ll be thinking toward the final product now so you can create more finished looking boards with more consistent looking characters and sets. Use your own thoughts on layout with the story in mind and work with Anton, Gary and Andy on iterating the best location for each board to tell your full story. Respond to feedback and plan for the completion of each board needed for the final reel. Coordinate with the folks working on concept art and character design so that our preproduction package looks cohesive, consistent and beautiful.

**Editor**

Be sure to coordinate with Happy on the proper placement of the boards. This is critical as boards out of order are difficult or impossible to review. You should have plenty of room on the server to work and save your work now that should help you enormously. A numbering system will be determined by the story group for each shot in the beatsheet. Please use that system and go over it with Happy so that you are both clear about how to work as efficiently as possible. Keep in mind that it will be important to work with the faux animation folks so that you can implement their ideas when you are in proximity. It just works better that way. If this is impossible, work out a way to get the information on email or whatever else works.

**Story Group**

The production review spent a huge amount of time looking through your current beatsheets and discussing main issues that have been central to our troubleshooting for some time. You’ve done a great job moving forward and preparing us all to think of many potential solutions. We decided to simplify the set as best we could by eliminating the destination of the girl (city, market?) while keeping the physical separation by adding her trip away from her mother but finding out about the death before she reaches the pharmacy to get needed medicine for her mother. In addition, we decided to keep the father in the beginning of the film but only as it affects Mei’s relationship with her Mother and presents even further isolation for mother and daughter. We worked with the problems of why the daughter leaves and why she comes back and how the audience will understand this. There are one or two remaining issues that you will need to continue to discuss and the boarders will too and we’ll see what works best. In addition we would like the whole class to steep themselves further into the Mongolian culture to infuse the story with the culture and the visual representation of it. We want you to firmly plant your story in Mongolia to make it feel more authentic wherever possible. This might require more thought and research.

**Concept Art/Character Design**

Terrific start on all of this preproduction. Since you provided specific images for us to review, we have specific suggestions for you in order to iterate your work. We could pick and choose among several styles and approaches what we felt was most workable for your film. You will have to work on a consistent look and feel while also experimenting a bit with ideas for concept art in particular. We’d like you to research props and objects for the interior of the yurt, the exterior of the yurt and the exterior campfire sequences as a group and also consider what the set as a whole in both the real world and the cloth world and the combination might look like. What will work best is to split up the workload the way we’ve assigned it while you each help each other by showing ideas along the way. Here’s the direction we’d like you to take: Make the story realworld lower chroma, almost monochromatic and design the interior yurt props to look really old and faded. You can use what you have provided but make them look very clearly dingy and owned by poor people. The cloth world will be vibrant and represent the rich imagination that they share. The motion will be faster and fluid. We looked at your reference for the worlds and will review it directly with you so that you get our feedback firsthand.

**Story Revision for November 26th, 2008**

1. **RW** We see a lone yurt glowing on the steppe at sunset.
2. **RW** Inside the Yurt, we see Oyon, the Mother teaching her six year old daughter Mei to quilt.
3. **RW** Mei looks in wonder as the images on the quilt animate to tell of the joy of her childhood.
4. **CW** As her embroidered self, daughter runs from one scene to the next in 4 animations
5. Mother tossing daughter happily in the air or twirling.
6. Oyon with baby daughter at the grave mound of the father
7. Dissolve to the same shot with Oyon, now older holding the hand of her six year old daughter.
8. From Mei's point of view, she imagines the spirit of the father she never knew, appearing, and reaching out to Oyon, his widow.
9. As his hand reaches to stroke his wife's face, he fades. (note: this is what Mei imagines and it is from her point of view.)
10. She looks up at her Mother with wonder and concern. (note: requires good acting) Mother smiles at Mei's expression. Mei is all she now needs.
11. **RW** Day, night, storm, sun. ( Note: How much time passes?) The yurt remains alone on the steppes. The now older daughter’s hand enters frame and works with an image. She is now 18.
12. **RW** Older mother’s hand moves over to pat her now grown daughter as she expertly continues to quilt an image of happy mother and young daughter, hand in hand
13. **RW** We see an aged, shaking hand painfully threading a needle. Mei's hand comes in and helps.
14. **RW** Mother shakes her head and cries into the quilt. Daughter’s hand takes mother’s hand.
15. **RW** Mei goes to the fire and prepares the last of the healing herb tea for her mother's hand.
16. **RW** The herb (medicine) store (bag or jar) is empty. Mei must travel a long way to get some more. the looks they exchange shows this is not a happy thought, but the separation is necessary.
17. **RW** Both women are seen outside their Yurt. Mei is prepared for a long journey and Mother and daughter say a prolonged good bye. They embrace.
18. **RW** Mei takes from her pocket a beautiful piece to sew into the quilt. An appliqué image (with an already threaded needle) of a loving Mother and Daughter (or some very moving scene from the quilt they worked on) and offers it to mother to make her leaving less painful.
19. **RW** Mother either takes the mother/daughter image and cuts or tears it in two. Giving Mei the image of Oyon and keeping Mei's image with her. Mei will take "mother" with her on her journey as a keepsake. Oyon will keep her child with her.

Or they exchange their favorite pieces from the quilt. Images of happier times**. (Note: these are both to be visualized by the boarders and then decided on Monday Dec 1)**

1. **RW** Mei leaves on her expedition to get medicine for her mother. Time passes**. (Note: How much time?)**. We see intercuts of Mei on her way/Oyon patiently sewing/Mei by firelight, looking at the cut-out of her mother while camped out at night near a small fire./Oyon seated in bed going over the happy times of the quilt and preparing to sew Mei into it./Mother shudders, drops the scissors and the cut-out of Mei falls to the floor by her bed as she dies/Back at camp, Mei's image of mother is blown by a sudden gust of wind into the fire. It catches fire and flares, then dies out, as does her campfire. / the Yurt on the steppe shows a silhouette of the mother's body covered by the quilt lying still on the bed as the warm glow of the fire that backlights her, sputters out as the yurt goes dark.

**OR** if the image is a mother & daughter and Mei plucks the burnt piece from the fire, sees the mother's image is gone or burnt. **(Note: these are both to be visualized by the boarders and then decided on Monday Dec 1)**

1. **RW** Mei realizes this omen of her cherished image of mother means something terrible has happened and rushes back to the yurt. It will take some time. We cut back and forth between the now still yurt and Mei's journey. (**Note: determine what the different weather is to show time passing**).
2. **RW** Near the Yurt, we see two ceremonial death mounds **(Note: Mother’s and Father’s)** as Mei's feet come to a stop at the mounds. We pan up and we see Mei understands what has happened. A tear rolls down her cheek.
3. **RW** Mei opens the door to the yurt.
4. **RW** Pan around the Yurt to an empty bed, quilt still draped on it, but no mother. **(note: although unspoken, the death mound shows us Mother was discovered and dealt with ceremonially and correctly according to the Mongolian tradition)**. On the floor we see the cut outs the mother was trying to sew into the quilt.
5. **RW** The daughter looks around the empty yurt. She kneels down to examine the last thing the mother worked on before she died.
6. **RW** Daughter takes the image of young Mei in her hands. She knows this was what Mother was looking at as she left this world. Mei's face shows sadness, then tenderness and resolve **(note: requires good acting)** as she strokes the quilt and realizes what she now must do.
7. **RW** Mei lights a fire and sits on the cot to stitch it into the quilt for that was what her mother would have wanted. As part of this shot we see the quilt in Mei's lap and we pan across the various images of childhood and memories seen earlier.
8. **RW** We move to outside the yurt and see the lone yurt glow back to life as the daughter begins to sew. (same or similar shot as our opening shot)
9. **Magic Combo** As the wind blows and sky deepens, the glowing walls of the yurt come alive with the images from the quilt as they dance around the daughter with her mother’s quilt.
10. **Continuation of Magic Combo** From the outside, we leave the now glowing yurt alone on the steppe and the silhouette of Mei sewing on the quilt surrounded by shadows of happy scenes. We pull back and away, knowing Mei has come to terms with the loss of her mother. The last shot is designed to be both peaceful and bittersweet.